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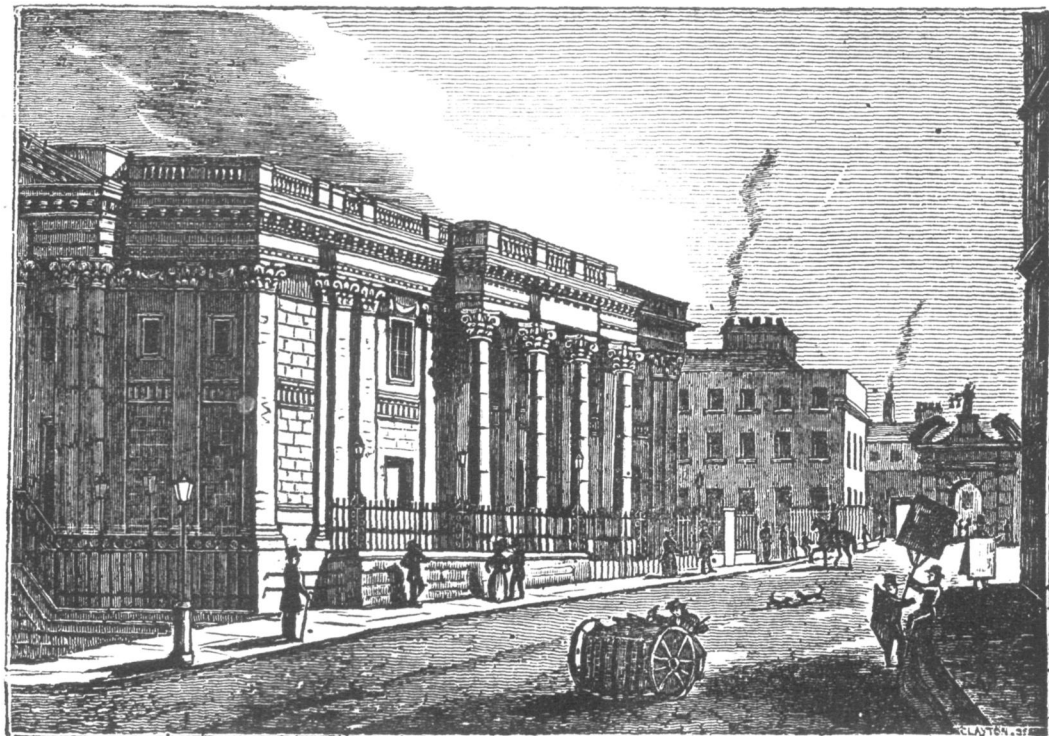
THE
DUBLIN PENNY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY P. DIXON HARDY, M.R.I.A.

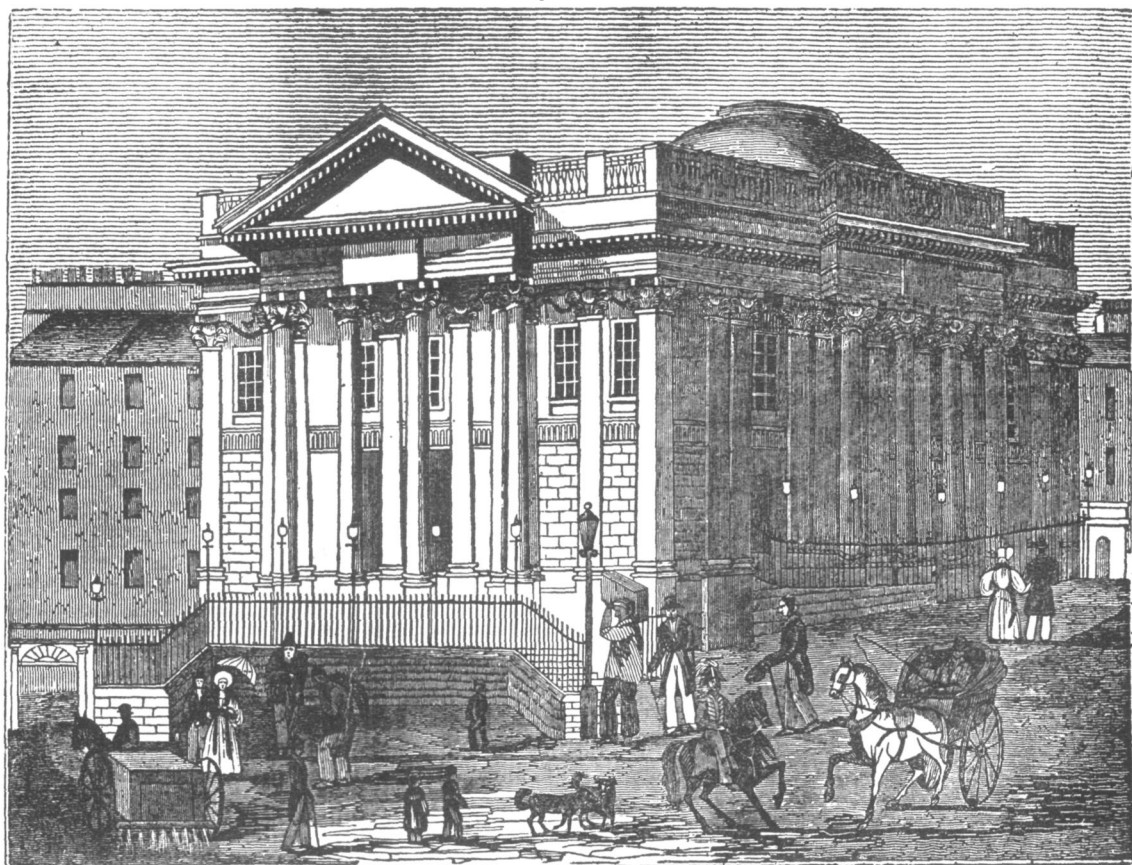
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No. 175



ROYAL EXCHANGE, DUBLIN.—WEST SIDE.



ROYAL EXCHANGE.—FRONT VIEW.

ROYAL EXCHANGE.

This elegant building, which stands on nearly the highest ground in the city, in a central situation, may be considered as one of the greatest ornaments of our metropolis. It is situated on Cork-hill, immediately adjoining the Castle gate, and has in front one of the longest avenues in Dublin, comprising Parliament-street, Essex-bridge, Capel-street, Bolton-street, and Dorset-street. Owing to the narrowness of Parliament-street, not more than half the building can be seen from that point.

It forms a square of 100 feet, crowned by a dome in the centre, and has three fronts, all of Portland stone. The north, or principal front, has a portico of six Corinthian columns (these at the extremities coupled,) whose entablature is continued along the three fronts, all of which are decorated with Corinthian pilasters, with festoons, &c. between the capitals. The top of the building is crowned by a balustrade, except where it is interrupted by the pediment on the north side; and above this, the summit of the dome is visible, but having no tambour it is too low to be distinctly seen. As the situation is on an exceedingly steep hill, the approaches are somewhat interrupted: that to the principal front is at the western end, where the terrace is level with the street; but the other end of this platform, or terrace, is blocked up by a high wall, surmounted by a heavy iron railing of enormous height, greatly disfiguring the front of this light and elegant structure.

This was not part of the original design, but in consequence of the sudden ascent of the ground, the architect continued the terrace, which was accessible at the east by a long and wide flight of steps, the west end being level with the street; the terrace was protected by a metal balustrade resting on rustic work. On the 24th of April, 1814, a crowd having assembled on this platform, to witness the whipping of a criminal, the balustrade yielded to the pressure, and numbers were precipitated into the street. The principal sufferers were those who stood below, some of whom were killed upon the spot, and many dreadfully bruised. Beneath the colonnade are three large iron gates, suspended on Ionic pilasters; these lead into a flagged hall, where are the entrances to the Exchange-hall. Over the gates and between the pillars are windows ornamented by architraves, lighting the coffee-room. On either side of the portico are two corresponding windows, resting upon a rich fluted impost or fascia, that serves as a cornice to the ground floor, which is rusticated and unperforated by any aperture, a circumstance that gives a peculiar and appropriate character to this structure, while it adds greatly to its strength.

The western elevation does not differ much from that on the north, except that the portico has only four columns and no pediment; and that there is only one window on each side, in the inter-pilaster adjoining the portico, the other being without any aperture whatever. The east front, which is in Exchange-court, has only pilasters: on this side are the entrances to the vaults of the Exchange, which are dry and extensive, and are generally let to the Commissioners of Customs, who frequently want more storage than the buildings attached to the Custom-house afford.

The ingenuity of Mr. Cooley is no where more conspicuous than in his design of the interior of the Exchange: the ground plan may be perfectly represented by the idea of a circle inscribed in a square, but the beauty and elegance of the effect produced, cannot be so readily represented by description.

Twelve fluted columns, of the Composite order, thirty-two feet high, form a rotundo in the centre of the building. Above their entablature, which is highly enriched, is an attic ten feet high, with as many circular windows, answering to the inter-columns below, and connected with pendant festoons of laurel in rich stucco work, and from this rises an elegantly proportioned dome, ornamented with hexagonal *caissons*. This is deservedly considered a chef-d'œuvre in the art of stucco plastering, and was executed by the late Alderman Thorpe of this city. In the centre of the *crown* is a large circular sky-light, which, with the assistance of the different windows, judi-

ciously dispersed around the hall, affords a profusion of light.

The inter-columns are open below to the ambulatory encompassing the circular area in the centre of the building. Ionic impost pilasters, about half the height of the columns to which they are attached, support a fluted frieze and enriched cornice, above which, in the upper spaces of the inter-columns, are pannel and other ornaments. The ambulatory is much lower than the rotunda, being covered with a flat ceiling, the height of the impost pilasters, with enriched soffits, extended from these pilasters to others opposite to them against the wall. Between the pilasters are blank arcades with seats.

Between two of the columns, immediately opposite the north or principal entrance, is a statue, in bronze, of his late Majesty, George III, standing on a pedestal of white marble, dressed in a Roman military habit, and holding a truncheon in his right hand, of which we shall give an engraving in our next number. This statue, the workmanship of Van Nost, was a gift of the Earl of Northumberland, Lord Lieutenant, (who paid the artist seven hundred guineas,) to the merchants of this city, for the Royal Exchange. Over the statue of his late Majesty, in one of the pannels beneath the entablature, is a handsome clock. Behind the four columns, which are opposite the four angles of the exterior wall of the building, desks are placed in the small angular recesses formed at the meeting of the tangents to the circular hall, which are not only convenient to the merchants, but contribute to square the exterior ambulatory, and to preserve an equal breadth in the entire length of the walk, at every side.

Both the circular hall and ambulatory are paved with square flags, alternately black and white, and gradually diminishing in breadth to the centre of the circle. The ambulatories are lighted by the doors of the north, east, and west sides, which are half glazed. At the eastern and western ends of the north front, are handsome oval geometrical stair-cases, with ornamented balustrades, lighted by lanterns inserted in a coved ceiling, the lanterns being the precise diameter of the central well of the staircase. On the stairs, in the north-western angle, is a beautifully executed statue of Dr. Lucas, of which, with a statue of Henry Grattan, which stands in the Hall, we purpose giving engravings in some future numbers.

This staircase leads to the Coffee-room, the Court of Bankrupt Commissioners, &c. The Coffee-room is immediately over the entrance on the north, and the other apartments are over the ambulatories.

The ceilings of those staircases are richly decorated with stucco-work; and in some of the compartments are casts of several figures found in the ruins of Herculaneum, which, being laid on coloured grounds, are distinctly seen.

On the 2d of August, 1769, the first stone was laid by Lord Townsend, the then Lord Lieutenant, and in ten years from that date, the Exchange was opened for the transaction of business.

MEETINGS OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION.

In the Zoological and Botanical Section, on Thursday, Mr. Mackay presented the following paper on Phanogamous Plants and Ferns indigenous to Ireland, which are not found in England or Scotland.

PLANTS AND FERNS INDIGENOUS TO IRELAND.

Erica mediterranea, E. B. Sup.—First found on Erris-beg mountain, near Roundstone, Connemara, Oct. 1829. It has since been observed by Mr. Wynne, jun. of Hazlewood, and other gentlemen in the wild district of Erris. It is a distinct variety from the plant cultivated in gardens under the above name.

Menziesia Polifolia—Plentiful throughout Connemara and the mountainous districts of Mayo. A beautiful variety with white flowers is occasionally met with, which is now highly esteemed in collections.

Arenaria ciliata—On the Limestone rocks of Ben Bulbin and other mountains of Sligo, where it was first found in October 1806.